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The Government of the South by the Plain People

By A. D. MAYO, A.M., LL.D.

*An Address Delivered to the Faculty and Students
of Berea College, Ky., on May 1, 1905*

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Abraham Lincoln used to say, "God seems to have a liking for the plain people." By the plain people Abraham Lincoln meant his own sort of people. The first we hear of his forefathers and foremothers was at the respectable county seat of Bristol County, Mass., from which my great grandmother hailed, and which she always spoke of (I don't know why) as "Taunton, good Lord." The first resting place of the family on its journey "out west" was Pennsylvania, where a descendant figures in the local records as "Mordecai Lincoln, Gentleman." Then the family branched off, a portion of them becoming Quakers, the majority going on to Virginia, and one that we hear of fighting under Washington in the War of the Revolution. The branch that "struck" Kentucky had for its nominal head perhaps the only "degenerate" member of the tribe; one of those men "sized up" to me by a bright and handsome colored chambermaid in Texas as "one of them comical creatures that we women marry and have to support." Happily, little Abraham was the son of one and the cherished little boy of another of that sort of women that go through life weighted with a "comical"

or worse man and still bring up their children to become "the salt of the earth."

Like George Washington, Abraham Lincoln never troubled himself about his ancestors. But what he meant by the plain people that "God seems to have a liking for," as far as related to

**Non-Slaveholding
Southerners.**

the South, was the five or six millions of white folk that in 1860 in these fifteen States had never in any way been concerned with the ownership of negro slaves. From the beginning these Southerners who were not slaveholders had formed by far the larger proportion of the white population. They fought the battles of the South—first in clearing the land of the "noble savage"; then supplying the bulk of its loyal populations in the Revolution; driving the crack regiments of Wellington and Waterloo into the sea at New Orleans, under "plain" Andrew Jackson; afterwards wresting the empire of Texas from Mexico and expanding the Republic towards the Southwest to the Pacific Ocean; and, finally, under General Robert E. Lee, through four terrible years, following their leaders from Charlestown to Appomattox with a devotion and courage so magnificent that nothing but the deplorable cause for which they fought could have caused their defeat.

But indeed what we call, by a figure of English speech, the "Southern Aristocracy" was not wholly aristocratic. The 350,000 "Southern Aristocracy," owners of slaves, the majority of whom were probably owned by 50,000 men, with their families and the profes-

sional classes amounting to some two millions of people, who for the first seventy-five years of the Republic possessed the earth, owned the four millions of colored laborers, monopolized the society, the wealth and the culture, and fashioned the religion of these eleven States to their own liking; and through this concentration of interest practically governed the nation till 1860—even this powerful and splendid aristocracy was itself the product of the plain people of the original European immigration and descent of the previous two hundred and fifty years. For the amiable hallucination with which the leading class of the South for these three centuries has beguiled itself, that it was the hereditary first cousin of the British aristocracy, is now, thanks to the historians, “on its last legs.” The less said about the bad boys of distinguished families that first came to Virginia and, but for Captain John Smith, would have disappeared in a “dissolving view” of shiftlessness and insubordination, the better for all concerned.

At the breaking out of the Revolution the people of Virginia were in no superior sense the descendants of the “Cavaliers”; al-
Not all though a portion of their best men came
Cavaliers. of fathers who fought under the Stuarts. For more than a century the British convict ships unloaded their freight upon the Atlantic southern colonies. These so-called convicts were not all criminals as we count criminals, to-day, but neither were they aristocrats. To a considerable extent they were people imprisoned for debt, non-

conformity to church law, or some very minor misdemeanors. During and after the Revolution that sent Charles I. to the block and made Oliver Cromwell Protector, the immigration to the South was a fair mixture of the followers of both the great English contending parties. For their original interest in education and the backbone of their religion, the Southern Atlantic colonies were indebted largely to the Scotch-Irish and the Germans: the latter declared by Washington "their best class of immigrants"—neither of them of the vaunted "Anglo-Saxon" stock.

The plain truth is that the Aristocracy of the South, previous to 1860, was founded on the plantation system of agriculture and in every essential feature was a New World copy of the British "gentry."

**Aristocracy
Founded on
Ability and
Service.**

It originated and was perpetuated for two centuries until 1860 in the same way as its British predecessor. Somebody has said: "Sixty thousand thieves came over with William the Conqueror and founded the British Aristocracy." Of course, the descendants of the Norsemen pirates, at that date, would hardly dispute this "title of nobility." But the original British nobility came up precisely as the leading class in Boston, New York and Chicago to-day—by promotion for ability of the kind then most in demand. Almost annihilated by the Wars of the Roses and the Protestant Reformation, the "Noble Lords" were renewed in the same way: by the promotion of men who in some way had rendered service to the state. To-day the British

nobility is what it is because it lives with its front door wide open, with the possibility that any ambitious and able boy can be added to its ranks for service in any profession, from every class and calling.

The aristocracy that governed the South and politically governed the nation till 1860, was built on no such foundation of "hay, straw and stubble" as an hereditary descent from its cousins in Motherland. Indeed, the North in 1860, were it interested in heredity, could trace as "noble" a heritage. Three hundred years ago Virginia included the present United States from the Atlantic coast as far westward as any white men had "set up his Ebenezer." There was "land to burn" at the disposal of the Crown. Every man who landed on the Southern Atlantic coast and was enterprising enough to make his own way could become the possessor of an estate that would rouse the envy of a British country gentleman. The possession of slaves and, first, the raising of tobacco, afterwards the monopoly of cotton and semi-tropical productions, enabled a small percentage of this people with true British energy to forge to the front. The real distinction of the British aristocracy is that, from the first, it has had a liberal wing to furnish leadership for the masses on the way to the present control of the House of Commons by the powerful Middle Class. Through the toils and conflicts of one hundred and seventy-five years this foremost class of the South by 1776 had been educated up to the British idea of liberal government and the de-

mand for the whole American white people of British civic and personal rights.

It may well be said that at this period our colonial was indeed the consummate flower of the British aristocracy. William E. Gladstone said: "When I was a boy, I read the life of George Washington and believed him the greatest man that ever lived, and I have never changed my opinion." It was indeed significant that, from this upper American class, North and South, a century ago, there came to the front a group of men who, according to the same authority, was pronounced the most eminent of its age in the fashioning of a republican order of society and government destined to become the common lot of mankind.

Had it not been weighted to its final death with the barbarism of negro slavery, this splendid order of republican nobility, with the states it represented, might have been indefinitely prolonged.

**Slavery the Bane
of Southern
Aristocracy.**

And for this burden it is hardly responsible. Three hundred years ago every Christian nation was slave-holding, and the masses of the continental European people in all essential rights and opportunities were half a century behind our ten millions of colored American citizens to-day. But no man or no class can hold any other man or class in chattel slavery without turning the back on every kind of man not of its own sort. So from year to year the slave-holding and dominant class, though dependent on the Southern plain white people for

the soldiery that cleared the land of the savage and fought its battles and cast its votes, left it practically out of account in the recognition of its fundamental right to education, and relied on the few that struggled up from the ranks to eminence to recruit its own ranks.

But with all this drawback, this Aristocracy, always in any emergency acting together, under Jefferson "expanded" the republic to the summit of the Rocky Mountains, and under Polk, Scott and Fremont carried the flag to the Southwestern Pacific shore. In 1860 there was probably no body of nobility in Europe so powerful, able to plunge a Christian nation into a civil war for its own existence, as the class that under Jefferson Davis for four years fought the Union, until amid the thunder of cannon in Old Virginia, in hearing distance of the sea beach smitten by the "fatal and perfidious bark" that landed the first cargo of negro slaves, it went to its death at Appomattox. Any great Aristocracy, like the present British, that always keeps in touch with and at every critical period yields to the just demand of the plain people, may be indefinitely continued, to the honor and glory of a Christian civilization. The fatal mistake of the Southern Aristocracy was that, under the assertion of the right of self-government for eleven States, in the full blaze of the nineteenth century, it struck for a new nationality, which, if achieved, would not only have established the last slave empire in Christendom, but would have left the plain white

people with few or no rights their political masters "were bound to respect."

But, as abroad, there was a "liberal wing" of this Southern Aristocracy. Thomas Jefferson always held his political theory of democracy conditioned on his other theory of Universal Education, which included the emancipation and education of the negroes and the training of every white child in a system reaching from the free common school to the State University. In his sorrow and wrath that his own State would not adopt his splendid ideal, he declared that "his own people would become worse than the inhabitants of the Barbary States." All the great Virginians were with him, and he left a growing common school public that in every Southern State for forty years attempted to put his educational system on the ground. And for the Southern Aristocracy, as a whole, it may be said, "nothing so became it as its leaving." During the twenty years after 1864, when the sons of the fathers were still permitted to govern the South, it adopted the American common school for both races and all classes, essentially as set up in every Southern State, by the power of the nation during the period of reconstruction. Having done this, its grandest work since the days of Washington, it "retired in good order," and no longer exists, as a class, in any Southern State.

But now what were the plain people of the South about during the first seventy years of the

Republic, up to the fatal year when, at the call of the aristocracy, they "shouldered arms" and through four years made for the American soldiery a name and fame undisputed through the world?

First, a body, now probably represented in the Northwest by as many people as the entire 2,000,000 of the old dominant Southern class, discouraged by the prospect at home, turned their backs upon the land of their birth and flocked to the new Northwest. Along with them were a considerable number of the more liberal-minded of the leading families, in pursuit of a broader opportunity than they left behind. During the twenty years from 1830 to 1850, nearly the entire body of pronounced anti-slavery people in the South, including the Quakers, removed West. Among them were the parents of Abraham Lincoln, and with him a large body of young men whose names became household words, twenty years later, in loyal service to the Union. No State contributed more valuable people of this sort to the three great Northern commonwealths across the Ohio River than Kentucky.

Those that stayed at home, under the leadership of the "liberal wing," the all-round followers of Jefferson, for thirty years, from 1830 to 1860, agitated every Southern State with their demand for common school education for the white people. They were opposed largely by the planter class and the Protestant clergy, who at that time had greater influence in Southern education than the Catholic clergy in Italy to-day.

Almost every Southern public man of national reputation understood and favored the educational movement, with some of the foremost leaders in the universities. But by 1860 only two border States, Missouri and Kentucky, with North Carolina and Louisiana and several of the largest cities, had succeeded in keeping on the ground a system of common schools for white youth; for which they were indebted to the labors of a group of educators that the children in these States in the future will crown with honor. The history of this remarkable movement has been given to the country by the United States Bureau of Education, and should be read by every school teacher in these sixteen States. The result was that, at the outbreak of the Civil War, there was a common school public in the South, the educational disciples of Jefferson, who were ready to take advantage of the opportunity that came, ten years later, to plant the American common school in every Southern State.

The four years of war were a great university for the plain white people of the South. First, it gathered up a million of their young and able-bodied men and sent them "on their travels" through their own vast empire, from Washington to Mexico. Twenty years ago a Southern Governor told me that not one man in five hundred in his State traveled one hundred miles a year. The stay-at-home Southerner of those States, outside of the upper sort and the immigrating class, lived within his own beat, away

**The Civil War
Brought the
Plain People
to the Fore.**

from contact with his betters, tied to his own possessions and hampered by illiteracy in a way nobody has yet published to the world. He had a vigorous training by his own obstinate sense of independence; as a soldier in the almost constant wars of the past century; in politics and religion chiefly by the public speaking and preaching of the famous body of Southern orators, of whom now and then one still dazzles the country by his magnificent, meteoric shower of splendid rhetoric. But the majority of them knew next to nothing of the resources of their own State and section, and the North in 1860 was farther away than "Farther India" and "Darkest Africa" to every bright Southern school boy to-day. In their tremendous campaigns that, in four years, "wore out" a generation more completely than the wars of Napoleon, which reduced the stature of French manhood two inches, this million, including nearly all the young men, for the first time were introduced to their own country; and that was a great education. They also learned that in war it is the brains behind the bayonets and the kind of "man behind the gun" that wins battles by land and sea. And it finally dawned upon them that the one thing in this world that can not be upset is the upper side of modern Christian civilization—a civilization then represented by the three million American men in arms for the preservation of a Union founded on a pledge of "the lives, the fortunes and the sacred honor" of their own great grandfathers and grandmothers.

There was also not a little schooling in letters going on in the Southern army. I heard of an entire regiment that during a winter encampment in South Carolina learned to read. I met, as the acting President of a Southern State university, a man who, in a great prison camp on Chesapeake Bay, through an entire season with a large number of the prisoners, went to school, and was there "fitted for college." In 1866 the whole South woke up to the idea that, unless something was done at once, a great multitude of its children, from five to ten, would be compelled to join the army of illiterates.

Also a new contingent, five millions of freedmen, was now added to the plain people of the South; declared and for ten years by the most hazardous experience in history raised to the position of "sovereign citizenship" and practically, under leaders not always from the North, wielding the government of eleven great American commonwealths.

Then the North and the Nation came to the rescue and during the ten years of so-called reconstruction established in every State, for the first time, the American common school for the whole people; realizing after eighty years the dream of Thomas Jefferson.

Of course, the system was crude, absurdly elaborate and expensive for the then poverty-stricken and demoralized South; in some States attempting the impossibility of schooling the races together. But, with all these drawbacks, including

**Reconstruction
Gave the
Common School
to the South.**

the splendid work done among the negroes and poorer whites under the protection of the army during the war, it probably by 1876 had taught two millions of children to read, had set many thousand Southern young men and women to teaching school, and had created in the upper strata of both races a demand for universal education that no body of public men dared to refuse. Whatever may have been the mistakes and the injury to the South during this reconstruction period, that fundamental work of establishing for the first time the American common school, for a century before declared by every great Southern statesman absolutely necessary to republican institutions, entitles the North, the negro citizen who always voted for education, and the nation to the everlasting gratitude of the whole Southern people.

Then it was first realized that the greatest gain to every Southern State by the war was the emancipation of the plain white Southern people from their old position of the past seventy-five years. First came the opportunity, hitherto only gained by leaving the South and taking up new lands in the West, to obtain new homes in the best lands of their own States. Thousands of the great plantations were divided and the farmers, hitherto confined to the less fertile uplands and the mountain country, swarmed down and "made themselves at home." The number of farms in fourteen States had increased 1,000,000 from 1880 to 1900. During the past forty years probably more than a million young men from

the leading families of the South, with thousands of young women, have moved on to the Northwest, the Pacific coast, and the greater cities of the Northeast. There is no longer any class in any such position of influence in any Southern State as the slave-holding aristocracy of fifty years ago. This, itself, has been a movement of incalculable importance to the plain white people, vastly increasing and diversifying the products of the land; opening the mines; felling the forests, and introducing them to every grade of manufacturing industry.

But even more important has been the establishment of the entire American system of common school education that, in forty years, has loosened the Southern home purse to the extent of several hundred millions of dollars; including to-day 3,000,000 white children and youth; in every considerable city offering free education to every child; having brought from the North probably more than a hundred millions of dollars invested in schools; with a group of Southern benefactors establishing and endowing new universities, and by home effort vastly enlarging the opportunities for the academical and collegiate education of every class of the white people.

Of course, the greatest result of this movement has been with the plain people of the South, who, for the first time in three hundred years, have been invited to share in the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of Christendom. And here again has been demonstrated the fact that every Anglo-

**The Liberal
Aristocrats.**

Saxon, and especially every American superior class, is at heart patriotic, and, in the last emergency, ready to respond to the words of the Master: "Let him who is greatest among you be your servant." Since the year 1870, for now thirty-five years, despite the usual Bourbon contingent that "we have always with us," the superior class of the South has given itself to the schooling of the plain people of both races, with an intelligence and zeal and at a sacrifice of money unsurpassed in the history of education.

I speak now of what I know. For twenty years I lived in the South in a "Ministry of Education" that included the whole people, from lowest to highest. For ten years past, in writing for the National Government the "history of the American common school," I have learned how, for two hundred and fifty years, the people of the North have been at work and through what toils, conflicts, sacrifices and countless experiments they have at last given to the republic its most precious possession—the present system of common, private and incorporated schools of every grade. And I say again, in view of all this, that whatever discount must be made for inevitable failure, indifference and hostility, no more valuable, patriotic and thoroughly American work has been done during these thirty years than by the superior people of the South in the planting of the common school and the revival of the higher education for both races and all classes. No group of men better deserves enrollment with the "fathers of their country" than George Pea-

body, an adopted citizen of the South, with Johns Hopkins, Paul Tulane, Mrs. Newcomb and others, and with them the leaders of education: William Preston Johnston, Atticus Haygood, Hugh S. Thompson and Dr. J. L. M. Curry, who already have gone on to the beyond; and another multitude, just "resting from their labors," men and "noble women not a few"—Laura Haygood, Clara Conway and Mary Stamps among the noblest of the noble.

"Part of the host have crossed the flood
And part are crossing now."

In this era of progress fifty per cent of the ten millions of negro citizens have learned to read the Bible and write their ballot—as soon as the rest of the plain people of the South will let them cast it. A great inroad has been made upon the fearful white illiteracy of fifty years ago. Multitudes of ambitious boys and girls, whose fathers and mothers "died without the sight," have welcomed the rising sun that now darts its searchlight into the darkest corners of the land. The latest Government report from the present sixteen States we used to call the South, excepting Missouri, gives the following record of public school affairs: Number of children and youth in school, 5,894,731. Average number of years in school for each pupil, 3¹/₂. Average number of school days in each year, 100¹/₂. Total amount expended in 1903 for education, \$31,000,000.00. (In the same year the State of New York expended \$37,000,000.00.) It may be fairly stated that during many years since the

war these States have expended as largely from their own property valuation in proportion as the North, with a far greater strain upon the educational public to maintain what has been gained each year and to make reliable progress.

And never was the North so ready, with no disposition to interfere in local school administration and no assumption of patronage, to pour out its wealth for the uplift of the plain people of the South of both races; to say nothing of its enormous financial investments in the material and industrial progress of this section, as to-day.

The final demonstration of the old-time Southern aristocracy that began with the establishment and perished in the attempt to destroy the republic; not as an organization, but through the last group of eminent statesmen the South has sent to Congress; was its splendid advocacy of the "Blair bill" for National Aid to Education; three times passed at the entreaty in the South of eighteen of the twenty-two Senators from the ex-Confederate States. The history of that eventful ten years has never yet been written. The North, and even New England, for good reasons, does not yet want it written. Had that great act of statesmanship become a law, with only an enforcement of average honesty, it would have furnished, not only to the present fifteen millions of the white, but to ten millions of the plainest plain colored Southern people to-day a common school as good as the West had enjoyed up to 1860. Thanks

**Movement for
National Aid for
Southern
Education.**

to several sorts of people, each of whom in turn will be brought to the bar of the final history that is written "by the inspiration of God," receive its sentence and pass on, this great bill was defeated. But no such demonstration of patriotic statesmanship and political foresight has come from the South since 1860, as this memorable Senatorial discussion, conducted under the approval of almost every superior educator of that section. History will put this on record, and it will be seen again that, finally, any Anglo-Saxon aristocracy, at home or abroad, can be trusted at the last emergency, at least through its own liberal wing, to stand up for the fundamental rights and the true glory of the whole people.

The failure of that final effort in the decade between 1880 and 1890 brought a great loss of heart and hope to the whole upper story of Southern civilization. But the time was then ripe for a new appearance on the stage of public affairs of the plain people, who for twenty years had been gradually moving to the front. It had already developed the class, most dangerous in public affairs—the first crop of political leaders raised up from a people inexperienced in the use of political power, and long subservient to a powerful and concentrated dominant class. It was fit that South Carolina, the revolutionary State of the South, and the State where the plain people had been from the beginning most thoroughly under the ban, should lead in this outbreak under the leadership of that most remark-

**The Plain
People Begin
To Govern.**

able combination of the shrewd, far-seeing politician and champion political freak of American politics—the Honorable Benjamin Tillman. He saw that the hour had struck to summon the plain white people of the South to the government of at least the eleven ex-Confederate States. For the past fifteen years he has been the ablest and most conspicuous leader of the movement that has brought every State that bolted the Union in 1861 under the absolute political control of the plain people. And he will be remembered chiefly from his praiseworthy educational labors for his own State, although otherwise forgotten. Nearly every important post of public influence in every one of these States is now held by the type of politician that always appears as the first representative of such a movement. Within these fifteen years, with the one break of North Carolina, these eleven ex-Confederate States have been governed by this type of leaders who have thus become the political successors of the great statesmen identified with the founding, the expansion, and, largely, with the glory of the nation. The plain white people of the South are now, for the first time, in power, but in the hands of untrained and ambitious leaders, who are often acting with questionable wisdom as to the permanent interests of their own section and the nation.

Meanwhile, in the face of the opposition of this political combination, the Republic has made the final new departure that every
The Nation
Adopts Its
Colonial Policy. Christian nation must make; as inevitably as a rising young man

must surround himself with a family of children to be educated, or remain a fruitless bachelor. That new departure is: the taking to itself of colonies from the child peoples who still comprise a majority of the inhabitants of the earth, to "train in the way they should go," and, according to the national ideal of a Christian republican civilization.

So here we are today: a people of eighty millions, no longer Anglo-Saxon, but of the new cosmopolitan American type, made up from every European nationality. There are in greater New York more Jewish American citizens than in Jerusalem; more Irishmen than in Dublin; except two or more cities of Central Europe, more of the Germanic and northern European sort; more southern-born white people than in New Orleans; only 27 per cent of what we used to call "Native American Stock." While Southern politicians pose as the purest of the Anglo-Saxon pure—whatever that may be—they are already scheming to flood this country with new millions of the ignorant Latin European folk, to "fight it out," through the labor unions with the ten millions of the native colored race that have made their States what they are. Today, of our ninety millions, one-fourth, here and in our colonies, consists of the plainest plain; the child peoples that within the past generation, for the first time, by the military power of the republic, have been liberated from the bondage of three hundred years.

The nation's call for the coming century, to which, indeed, all of Europe is waking up, is the solution of the problem of the ages: how to educate "all sorts and conditions of men," all the immortal children of a God whose name is love; into the final achievement of Christian statesmanship; the art of "dwelling together in unity," every man in his own place; all "working together for good;" to bring in the kingdom of heaven on earth.

This republic, so far, has not only "followed the American flag," but the American flag has from the beginning followed the divine Providence; the Creator of all worlds, the Sovereign of every human soul. Guided by that Providence, the nation is called to deal, on the one hand with the American representatives of "Darkest Africa," and on the other with the first ten millions in Asia invited to sit down at the table and eat and drink at the banquet that celebrates the inauguration of a "government of the people, by the people, and for the people," round the world. No section, no class, no party, no church will be entrusted with the working out of this mighty problem. It is given alone to the whole American people to decide between the Pagan and the Christian way of solving this riddle of the ages; the last and most obstinate "sum" to be "ciphered out," to "bring the right answer," on peril of being remanded to the dust heap of history, where lie the remains of every nation of the past that "knew not God."

The Pagan theory of the so-called "race ques-

tion" is briefly this: Government of the many by

The Pagan Theory of Caste. the few and for the few; a man born in the superior class is al-

ways superior; a man born in the inferior class always inferior. Every superior man and woman is a brevet deity, promoted at last to the Pagan Pantheon, where is gathered together a celestial rabble, best represented in the mythologies of Greece and Rome with the "dim religious" background of the Gods who were no Gods; the awful fates of the Oriental world. The business of the dignitaries in this Pantheon is, in the intervals of its own quarrels in the upper story above the clouds, to amuse itself with petting or tormenting the swarming millions of "human trash" in this "vale of tears below." And unless that celestial crowd has greatly mended its "tricks and manners;" if following the example of royal visitations to our Republican shores, it should appear some fine Monday morning in the Greater New York, every soul of them would be in Sing Sing, each awaiting its turn to mount the electric chair before Saturday night. Or if they landed in New Orleans, they would all be lynched before sundown of the same day, amid the applause of the American people.

Eighteen centuries ago, when the whole civilized world was gathered up in the fist of a Roman Emperor, awaiting his assassina-

The Christian Idea—a Chance for Every Human Being. tion on earth to become a new God in the Pantheon, a wandering prophet, away off in a province more obscure than any island in the Oriental

seas today, in a plain talk with a group of plain people about him, laid down the law of life which, yet, only half understood and less than half applied, has already created what we call Christendom. In two sentences, containing thirty-two words, all of which could be engraved within the golden circle of the American eagle—value ten dollars—Jesus said: "Let him who is greatest among you be your servant. Even as the son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many." Just in proportion as every so-called Christian people has "squared up" to this supreme law of human life, this absolute constitution of human government, it has become a permanent nationality; and today only as any nation is working on that line is it a vital power in the progress of mankind.

Now, the plain people of the South; for the first time in political power, and fast becoming supreme in Southern society, is taking its first lessons in the art of republican government, according to the ideals of the fathers. These ideals, a hundred years ago, were the highest conception then reached of the method of solving all race questions, laid down by the greatest teacher and statesmen, because the Savior of mankind. I am not here to tell you what success or failure has attended this beginning, under the sort of Southern leadership that appears, on the first Monday of every December, in the Capitol at Washington. Only, let us not

**The Plain People—
What Leaders Shall
They Follow?**

imagine for a moment that the acts of half a dozen Legislatures, and the vaticinations of the gospel of sociology of which Orator John Temple Graves is the prophet, are to be the permanent decisions of the fifteen millions of our white Southern folk. For every white man in the South today has become in an eminent sense one of the plain people; and in the outcome we shall see there, as everywhere, the survival of the fittest.

Nobody cares what company a gentleman in Virginia or Texas chooses to keep, if he manages to keep outside of the "revised statutes." But every gentleman and lady in this Republic will some day find out that there is no permanent class or caste in this Nation, made up of every shadow of a shade of color and every variety of race and "previous condition" on the face of the earth. So our friends can be excused from lying awake o' nights, scheming to preserve the "purity of the Anglo-Saxon race," by remanding twenty millions now under the American flag to the condition of the old European serfdom that Russia is lying awake o' nights with hideous dreams, just now, agonizing how to change to a new Russian citizenship. If these admirable people will read their New Testament through the spectacles of the "common Christianity," and realize that they have today the grandest opportunity on earth in the education and training of their ten millions of colored citizens, not to be Anglo-Saxons, but to become the best that the Lord of us all had in mind at their introduction upon earth, they can safely leave the business of evolving the new

American order of society in His hands. For in this Republic the "best society" means the society of the best people, of all sorts and conditions. This uppermost of all "upper classes" lives with its doors and windows open, four square to all comers. Anybody from anywhere may come in and live and be happy, as long as he understands and tries to live up to the conviction that all his superiorities are loaned to him by God for the sake of the "general welfare." And he will cease to be a member of God's American aristocracy when he makes up his mind not to live up there, but to leave the Father's house and waste his substance in any kind of "riotous living." But he must not be surprised if he finds up there a certain little Hebrew widow who one day, surrounded by the "smart set" of Jerusalem, modestly appeared at the public treasury and "cast in all her living," two mites; less than anybody would now drop into the American contribution-box in its endless round from church to church. And a certain young man, afterwards crucified as a heretic and a rebel, looking on, remarked, "She hath given her all."

This conceit of the latest Southern sociology with several other notions of similar import, all tracing their descent from Pagan Rome and fatalistic India, is bound, in the providence of God that, like the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, goes before the flag,

"To have its little day—

But thou, O Lord, art more than they."

Now, how shall the plain people of the South be educated up to the ideals of the true Washington, the true Jefferson, the real Franklin, the upper strata of the fathers we all alike hold in reverence?

**The Plain People
Must Learn How
To Rule.**

The nation, as represented by the North today, can do little save what it has practically for the past twenty-five years done—leave these eleven ex-Confederate States in a political minority, as long as they please to isolate themselves from the present American ideals and policies of national life. Meanwhile we can show them, in dealing with the child peoples in our new colonies, our way of “solving the race question.” But there is a point beyond which no party or State can go in dealing with those twenty millions of our new citizens without “coming up to the Captain’s office to settle.” And, thanks to the superior class of the colored people, under the leadership of their first statesman who has the right to assume the name of Washington; in connection with that portion of the Southern white people who will see that in dealing with them “the Republic receives no harm,” we can safely, for the present, leave the masses of the plain people of the South to their own home schoolmaster for instruction and leadership. In due time they will, doubtless, touch elbows with our Christian civilization, and realize the beautiful ideal of union now set forth by our preacher President; in his travels through the Southland to his month’s interview with the inhabitants of the wilderness; who probably by

our grandchildren will be gathered into schools, where the lion and the lamb may lie down, outside each other, and be at peace.

Our magnificent North, in its joy and gladness over the ending of the Civil War, has never

**The Border State
and Mountain
Loyalty** yet quite understood the part so nobly played by the loyal South in the saving of the Union. What

with the five loyal border States, Missouri, Kentucky, West Virginia, Maryland and Delaware; with the almost united patriotism of the entire Appalachian region and other portions of the Southwest; it is not an exaggeration to say that to them and the descendants of the immigrating Southern people in the Northwest the Union must have been indebted for well-nigh 500,000 of its three million soldiers, first and last, under arms. With the strategic importance of this great "buffer" between the fighting North and the eleven Confederate States, and, above all, the marvelous political strategy of Abraham Lincoln in the White House; to say nothing of the splendid military and naval leadership of Thomas and Farragut and the group they represented; it is not too much to assert that if the Republic was not saved by the Southern loyal soldiery, three times the number at any time commanded by Washington, it was saved from perhaps another four years of General Sherman's "Hell," with its terrors of further desolation and more enduring unreconciliation.

Since 1865 the struggle for an all-round Americanism in these five States, even extending to

Virginia, North Carolina and Tennessee, has been prolonged, and is now only in the beginning. West Virginia was the first Southern State that moved in the establishment of the full common school, even before the close of the Civil War.

Of these 500,000 white and colored soldiery, none are more deserving of the nation's gratitude than the strong fighters from the highland region, which perhaps sent forth, men and boys, a half of this patriotic host. During those awful years, living in the city of Cincinnati, then the best Northern watch-tower of the Southwest, compelled by an unworkable body to stay at home and do my best for my country, my frequent habit was to visit the landings at the river when the boats came in from above, crowded with women and children, who, all the way from the Queen City to the Big Sandy, were cared for by the good people along the northern Ohio shore. It was then that I said to myself: "This country owes to these fathers and mothers, who, like the widow of Palestine, have 'given their all' and then 'thrown themselves in,' the training that shall make their children and their children's children worthy of themselves. God helping me, I will enlist in that war." And twenty years later I heard the call and went forth, and now, for five and twenty years, have done my uttermost to help my country pay that debt.

This home leadership that shall bring the plain people of the South into no politician's rhetorical, recognizes the full opportunity and obligation

**A Task for the
Young Men and
Women of
the South.**

of "working together for good" in the uplift of the whole people, must largely be assumed by the descendants of those courageous men and women who under almost incredible peril and sacrifice a generation ago stood up for the salvation of the republic. In a hundred ways that these young people know a hundred times better than anybody from the North can tell them, they must see to it that this pagan policy of the exploiting of our latest come 20,000,000 to preserve the purity of the Anglo-Saxon or any other race on earth shall not prevail. This policy, now everywhere insinuated in the "upper circles" of society, blurted in trade unions of foreign-born and only half-naturalized workmen, or boastfully, even eloquently, proclaimed in legislative and university halls, when looked through, is only the old story of the children of the good Methodist minister, who begged their father that they "might learn to dance." "No, my dear children, dancing is sinful." "But, Pa, didn't you and Ma dance when you were young?" "Yes, my children, but we have seen the folly of it." "Oh, Pa, just let us dance and see the folly of it, too." This crowd of our high-stepping new statesmen and social philosophers can not, like the aristocracy before them, legally hold the colored laboring class of the South in chattel slavery. That body of men, two hundred and fifty years ago, followed the rest of the world in their organization of labor in a semi-tropical country. Their historians have the right to claim that the two hundred years of

negro slavery, by the Providence that is evermore "from evil still educing good," was a university, teaching their bondman the three fundamentals of American civilization, the habit of continuous work, and the knowledge of the language and the religion of the world's chief republic. But now, when the entire white population of the South is called upon by this class of its political and social leaders to imitate the Russia of half a century ago and remand 20,000,000 of Americans to perpetual serfdom, with the denial of every right especially dear to every man ready to fight for the old flag, the country calls upon the sons and daughters of the loyal South of '61 to save its friends and brethren from "seeing the folly" of dancing to that played-out tune. In this grand campaign of education the newest new South will have behind it, not only the overwhelming masses of the North, but, as Abraham Lincoln wrote in his proclamation of freedom, "the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God."

Young men and women, students whom I now address, this Berea College of ours has stood for fifty years and, despite all hindrance, stands to-day the only institution of learning south of the Potomac and the Ohio that under one roof represents the complete American ideal of the education of all on the basis of our "common Christianity," through the discipline and methods of the new education, accessible to the plain people now sitting in the seat of judgment in the South. But, more than any college of the ordinary type, Berea

represents the loyal South that, with the mighty North, a generation ago saved the Union, not only for you and me, but for those who earnestly did their bravest and best to tear themselves away from its protecting arms. Remember, whatever goes up or whatever goes down, Berea College of Kentucky is here to stay and do its own best in helping to educate the twenty millions of the nation's little children; thus consecrating itself to paying the nation's debt to the heirs of those who fought and died to save the nation before you were born. You come here not merely to "get an education," but to be reminded that to you and the like of you the country looks to lead the grand procession of the plain people of the South of all races and conditions towards the only Union that is proof against wars more terrible than the past, for those who will live here after you are dead. I urge you to give the best years of your manhood and womanhood to your own people; to the little children and the ambitious youth who can not come here, but are waiting to hear all about the great "good tidings" that God, through your faithful teachers and consecrated President, is so ready to impart. Meanwhile, don't forget how to shoot straight—as your great-grandfathers at King's Mountain, your grandfathers at New Orleans, and your fathers under Abraham Lincoln, their commander-in-chief, shot at everybody who attempted to destroy this republic. You will need even more rapid-firing guns than theirs to clear the land of vermin and face every enemy of your country everywhere

around the world. But don't forget that your call just now is "to teach the young idea how to shoot."

Young men and women, who come to Berea from the North; don't come here because knowledge is served up at a cheaper rate than at home by a faculty now doing more and better work for less money than any body of good teachers I know. Strike hands and hearts with these, your brothers and sisters, and go back resolved that no such barbarism as the ignorance of the Christian way of living and working together for the common good shall prevail within your beat, so help you God. I shall not live to see even the full dawn of this coming of the kingdom in our beloved land. But, as old John Adams wrote to old Thomas Jefferson, "you and I may rejoice together in Heaven over the coming of the glorious day when all the children are at school." Then the flag that floats over the schoolhouse roof here on earth will mean the same thing for all these millions in the twentieth century of our Lord.

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